

Final - Wheaton Redevelopment

April 21, 2010

Mid-County Regional Services – 2424 Reedie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Members Present, Gregory Baker; Maureen Carrington; Eleanor Duckett; Jonathan Fink; Rahman Harrison; Manuel Hidalgo; Chris Lindsay; Diane Lynne; Thomas; Martin; Susan Petersen; Morey Rothberg; Robert Schilke; and Dave Taghipour

Members Absent: Mara Baer; Elizabeth Boyle; Melissa Brown; Filippo Leo; Zoe Lefkowitz; Erin Roberts; and Fran Ware

County Staff Present: Gary Stith; Pete McGinnity; and Sharon Lasswell

Guest Speakers: Sandra Tallant, Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

Guests: John and Matt Echave; Dan Sheveiko, KHCA; Karen Cordry, KHCA; Larry Silverman, KHCA; and Leah Jones and Amber Parcher from the Gazette

Meeting Called to Order by Chairperson Greg Baker at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the March minutes made by Mr. Schilke and seconded by Ms. Lynne. Minutes were approved.

Sector Plan Update and Process – Sandra Tallant and Josh Sloan

- Planning staff are still developing the staff draft; they are scheduled to present to the Board on June 3, 2010; and a community forum will precede that presentation on May 19, 2010.
- Ms. Tallant provided an overview of the CR Zone (commercial/residential). Its purpose is to create different scaled mixed-use areas. It offers a higher level of certainty to the developer and the community and is very specific about the public benefits. The CR Zone is closely matched with the vision of the Sector Plan. The zone promotes walk ability and transit use.
- How is the CR Zone different – it removes the current bias for “By-right” development. Under the CR Zone, “By-right” development will be limited to .5 Floor-to-area (FAR – which is a measure of density) and extra density authority is awarded based up public amenities proffered. Other differences include – better definition of neighborhood character and improved transition to surrounding neighborhoods; lower parking and open space standards providing large cost savings and better design; and there are no bonuses.
- Currently, a site plan is not required in a commercial zone; however a site plan is required in the CBD zones for projects with a 1, 2 or 3 Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
- In a CR Zone, if the project is greater than 10,000 sq. ft., optional method is required, as well as site plan. Under a CR Zone more people would be going through site plan; there is no minimum lot size in the optional method. Like the CBD zones, CR public input is part of the development review process
- The Build Lot Termination (BLT) is a program related to the Agricultural Reserve. BLT’s are development rights that are purchased from the Agricultural land that are transferred to a more urban area. In the CR zone, the purchase of BLTs results in

additional density and it preserves agricultural land within the agricultural reserve. Ms. Tallant will get back to Ms. Duckett regarding the number of BLT's available.

- A CBD Zone requires twice as much open space as a CR Zone.
- A unique feature of this zone allows Park and Planning (P&P), in the Sector Plan, to prioritize and customize the public benefits specifically for Wheaton.
- Mr. Stith said the zoning would not change until after the Sector Plan has been adopted. Once the Sector Plan is approved by the Council, a Sectional Map Amendment will be prepared in summer 2011, and the Council could adopt new zoning the fall of 2011.
- The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance is being done in several phases. (1) The first phase, performed in-house by planning staff, was basically the diagnostic of the existing code and research on other codes; (2) Phase two an outside consultant was hired to draft the ordinance over the next year.
- Mr. Sloan talked about incentive density. He asked the members to think of the standard method density as the floor and the maximum density allowed in this zone as the ceiling, that space is the incentive density. Each public benefit has a set of rules and some have to be followed to get your incentive density, while some are left to guidelines that the Board is required to provide. The guidelines have been presented to the Planning Board and are out in public circulation for the next month waiting for public comment. The guidelines are available on P&P's website. Mr. Sloan will set up a link. Mr. Sloan can be reached at 301-495-4597.

Term Expirations for WRAC Members – Recruiting New Members – Mr. Baker

- There are currently ten (10) vacancies being advertised on the WRAC. Four (4) vacancies are due to the second term expirations of – Mr. Harrison (resident), Mr. Morrison (business), Mr. Rothberg (resident) and Ms. Goris, the Westfield representative who resigned due to transfer (business). Six members are finishing their first terms and need to reapply if they are interested in serving another year – Mr. Fink, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Lefkowitz, Mr. Lindsay, Mr. Taghipour and Ms. Baer. In filling these vacancies, Mr. Baker would like to get more diversity on the committee, in terms of young people, residents from the new housing projects, small business owners, school district representatives, demographics, and ethnicity to be more reflective of the community.
- Members were asked to think of individuals that might be interested in serving on WRAC and forward their information to Mr. McGinnity. A recruitment flyer for WRAC was distributed to all members and a PDF version will be sent to all members for distribution to interested individuals.
- If a member is up for reappointment an interview is not necessary. However, they must send a letter of interest to the County Executive. It is considered inappropriate for these members to sit on the selection committee of new members. Ms. Lynn volunteered to participate on the selection committee.
- Mr. Stith advised, when WRAC was established by the County Executive, there were no requirements to have a specific number of individuals from designated areas i.e. business, residential or civic associations.

Washington Properties (WP) – Ms. Petersen, Chair, Project Review Subcommittee

- Ms. Petersen asked members of her subcommittee to make more of an effort to attend the subcommittee meetings. She was sole representative at their last meeting and this is not fair to the organizations presenting their projects.

- Washington Properties made a presentation to the Project Review Subcommittee on April 15th. The project is situated on Georgia Avenue next to Bally's and consists of a 221-unit residential apartment building with a parking underneath located. The Project Review Subcommittee was in support of the project. The project brings needed density to the area. They have the goal of achieving LEED Silver or Gold.
- Washington Properties sought support from the Project Review Subcommittee in its request before the Planning Board to change from an R60 zone to a TS-R zone.

MOTION by Ms. Petersen and seconded by Ms. Carrington to –

- **Send a letter to Dr. Royce Hanson, Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board stating WRAC's support for rezoning of the property located at 10914 Georgia Avenue in Wheaton from R-60 to CR to allow the Washington Properties to construct their project. Motion passed with Ms. Lynne and Ms. Duckett abstaining.**

BB&T Bank Project – Ms. Petersen, Chair, Project Review Subcommittee

- The proposed BB&T Bank project is located at the corner of University Blvd. and Valley View Avenue; the project replaces three dilapidated and vacant residential structures; provides quality architectural design and transitions well to the residential neighborhood.

MOTION by Ms. Petersen and seconded by Mr. Schilke to –

- **Send a letter to Dr. Royce Hanson, Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board stating WRAC's support for the BB&T Bank project at University Blvd. and Valley View Avenue. Motion passed with Ms. Duckett opposed.**

ZTA 10-04 – Mr. Baker deferred this Agenda item for several reasons:

- He has not seen the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) and has asked staff to send him a copy; there isn't enough information.
- The ZTA should be reviewed by the Project Review Subcommittee (PRS) prior to coming to the full WRAC. The PRS will discuss the ZTA at their meeting on April 29 @ 7:00 in room 215. The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection and Westfield Wheaton will give a presentation at the meeting on April 29.
- Park and Planning staff and the GreenWheaton Group will be notified of the April 29 meeting.
- Mr. Baker reminded members that the subcommittees were consolidated. Environmental issues will be addressed by the Economic Development Subcommittee (EDS) members may wish to attend the GreenWheaton meetings and provide feedback to WRAC.

Redevelopment Report – Mr. Stith

- Regarding the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the County did not receive submissions for the property located at Lot 17 and Veteran's Park; that area could be an opportunity in the future.
- They did receive submissions related to the core area (WMATA Bus Bays, Mid-County RSC, Lot 13) and Parking Lot 14 on Blueridge Avenue.
- The committee reviewing the submissions has "short listed" those submissions and asked for additional information and prepared a list of specific questions as a result of reviewing their submissions. Interviews, of those short listed, will take place on May 17. The County hopes to have a developer(s) they will recommend to the County Executive and a developer(s) selected early this summer.
- WRAC will work with the developer(s) on development concepts.

- On April 15, the Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan and Project Plan applications for the Safeway/Patriot Project. Mr. Baker, on behalf of WRAC, testified in favor of these applications.
- Capital Projects are moving forward: Streetscape on Fern Street (west) will begin in May and Elkin Street, both sides, should begin in July.
- WRP is looking at possibilities for artwork to be located in the new Wheaton Pedestrian Walkway.
- Hollywood East Café reopened at Westfield mall.

Ms. Duckett asked for clarification on how much money Westfield was committing to the Taste of Wheaton. Ms. Parcher from the Gazette responded, as she wrote the original article, by stating Westfield would commit \$800,000 for many community projects and some are for multiple years.

Subcommittee Reports

Planning and Visioning – Mr. Martin

- Ms. Tallant provided an update on the Sector Plan. The subcommittee is waiting for the preliminary plan and will work off of it.

Sector Plan Work Group – Mr. Martin

- They discussed the new CR Zone and how it works.

Project Review – Ms. Petersen

- They have been looking at three projects: Washington Properties; BB&T Bank and Safeway.
- They will discuss the ZTA at their next meeting on April 29 at 7:00 pm.

Economic Development – Mr. Fink

- Since the Subcommittee restructuring, their first meeting was April 13 at 5:30 p.m.
- Looking at the small business tool kit and the various materials created in the past; the small business survey done in 2005 might be worth updating; brainstorming other possible activities for the subcommittee; and looking at tracking State legislation pertaining to small business.
- May have recommendations to present to the full committee next month.

Say No to Saturday Parking Meters – Mr. Hidalgo

Mr. Hidalgo distributed copies of a petition that strongly opposes increasing parking meter hours in Downtown Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Bethesda to include Saturdays. The Council is debating the value of extending parking meter hours to Saturdays in FY11 to generate revenue during this fiscal crisis. The residents and small business owners who signed the petition could support increasing the hourly rate of parking meters, but are opposed to extending the parking meter hours to include Saturdays. This would not affect Lot 13. The founder of the Fenton Street Market will present the petition to the Council tomorrow at the public hearing and would like WRAC members to review the petition and sign as individuals, as there is not enough time to prepare a response from the full WRAC.

Mr. Stith advised the Enterprise Zone legislation allowing tenants to take advantage of tax credits is waiting signature by the Governor. This legislation was submitted by Delegate Alfred Carr and supported by WRAC. He also mentioned, according to an article in the Gazette, despite the economic recession, crime in Wheaton dropped 9.3 percent in 2009.

The Taste of Wheaton will be May 16 from 11:00 to 5:00 at Lot 13. Ms. Lasswell encouraged members to volunteer at the WRP booth to assist with community inquiries. Members were asked to contact Ms. Lasswell if they were interested in volunteering.

Community Comments: Several citizens (Karen Cordry; Larry Silverman and Dan Sheveiko) from Kensington Heights Citizens Association (KHCA) were present to express their concerns regarding the proposed Costco gas station. Father and son filmmakers John and Matt Echave were present to film the discussion. To be respectful of time, Mr. Baker asked if there were one or two people that could speak for the group.

Community Comments (cont'd): Mr. Larry Silverman spoke:

- He is a resident of Takoma Park and serves as Chair on the Water Quality Advisory Group and has experience with difficult projects.
- He thanked the Chair for deferring discussion on the ZTA until he had read it.
- Mr. Silverman met with Stan Edwards' boss at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding the ZTA.
- He is concerned about the negative affects the gas station would have on the neighboring community.
- He encourages Westfield to talk with and engage the community.
- He asks that the committee to make decisions based on facts.

Ms. Cordry referenced the three page ZTA and mentioned its primary intent. They will come to the next Project Review Subcommittee meeting on April 29th.

Mr. Baker explained the WRAC is a diverse committee comprised of residents, neighbors and small business owners. WRAC's purpose is to evaluate proposals, deliberate on them, and forward their recommendations to the County Executive and/or other elected officials. This committee is aware of what a ZTA does, however they have not seen this specific ZTA. The Project Review Subcommittee will be looking at this ZTA. This is a redevelopment committee and we are generally supportive of redevelopment. This committee wrote a letter of support for Costco, not for the ZTA.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:43.